

RADFORDS DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL FOR A NEW VILLAGE HALL

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q1	Is there any firm agreement about a new hall at present?
A1	No, there is simply a tentative proposal that is being considered and no planning application has yet been made. No final decision on the proposal will be made without all the information being made available and the opportunity for all parishioners to voice their views.
Q2	What exactly is the proposal?
A2	Charles Church will apply for consent to build a community building and 5 houses on the land currently designated for the three light industrial units (B1 units). Charles Church will also apply for Condition 11 to be relaxed or removed (see A4 below). The community building (and the land that it is on) will be transferred to Chew Stoke. The houses will be open market houses – four 2-bed homes and one 4-bed home.
Q3	Who will pay for the construction of the proposed new community building?
A3	Charles Church, the developer of the Radfords' site, have said that they would be willing to fund the building costs. There will be fitting out costs to be met by the parish.
Q4	Why are Charles Church now willing to pay for the construction of a community building?
A4	Charles Church are house builders and do not build commercial buildings. A condition of the planning consent for the site (Condition 11) was that three light industrial units (as well as the medical centre) had to be "substantially completed" before the final six open market houses could be "occupied". So, to get their profit out of the site, Charles Church need to complete the commercial part of the Radfords' development and our understanding is that there has been no serious interest in the light industrial units. Charles Church would, therefore, like be able to relax or remove Condition 11. To facilitate this, there is the proposal that they provide a community building for the village on part of the land designated for light industrial units (along with more housing).
Q5	Could Charles Church obtain the relaxation/removal of Condition 11 in any event and without building the light industrial units or any new hall?
A5	That is a possibility. Having marketed the light industrial units for more than eighteen

	<p>months, they still have no takers for them. The site for the doctors' surgery has been sold to the doctors and the building of the new surgery starts in March 2011. If Charles Church applied to B&NES for the relaxation, it is possible that the planners might think it reasonable to agree to the request bearing in mind the amount of time that has passed in terms of marketing the industrial units and having regard to the development of the surgery and the related employment being established in the village. If Charles Church were able to get a relaxation of Condition 11 and so sell the final 6 houses, there is a possibility that they will simply leave the light industrial site as it is now (and perhaps come back in years to come to try to sell the land again or try to obtain consent to build houses on the land). If this happens the parish will receive nothing from Charles Church and will be left with the bare site for some time to come.</p>
Q6	Why have Charles Church been unable to let the light industrial units and hence complete the development?
A6	This would need to be asked of Charles Church, but the current economic climate has potentially had a bearing on this. There is also the fact that there are other competing sites – Fairseat Workshops in the village and then various small industrial sites in the surrounding villages and in the Chew Valley generally.
Q7	Would Charles Church obtain planning consent to change the use of the employment land and how would the construction of a community building facilitate the lifting of Condition 11?
A7	To build something other than the light industrial units goes against planning policy for that land and so it will not be easy to get the change of use. The relaxation of Condition 11 is a different matter but the proposal is for both to be considered as a whole package. The planners have indicated that they will look more favourably on an application for change of use and also an application for the relaxation of Condition 11 if a community facility is part of the plan (as opposed to just houses). It is felt that there is a reasonable chance of success with a good application and subject to general support locally for the scheme.
Q8	Would Charles Church plan to build more houses as well as the community building?
A8	Yes, as mentioned above, they would also build one 4-bedroom house and four 2-bedroom houses on the site.
Q9	Can the village sustain three community buildings (the Church Hall, the Methodist Hall and a new building)?
A9	It seems unlikely that it would be able to do so. The church hall, although owned and run by the Church, is viewed by many as a community facility. However, the hall does require a lot of money spent on it (new heating, new toilets, better insulation and so on). There is a current possibility of a grant for a substantial amount of money but even this will not be sufficient to make all the desired changes and upgrading. If a new facility were to be built, it is acknowledged by the PCC and the Parish Council that the existing church hall would have to close.

Q10	What is the Church's view of the potential plan?
A10	The Parochial Church Council has indicated that it is supportive of the plan, in principle, although more detail is required. The PCC acknowledges that a new hall would be a replacement for the existing church hall.
Q11	I have heard that the Church is to request permission to build more facilities in St Andrews. What is the Church planning to do?
A11	The Church is planning to install toilets and a kitchenette, to move the font, to remove some pews and to improve the heating etc. – the aim being to equip the building for the years to come and to make it possible to hold a greater range of events in the church itself.
Q12	If the Church Hall closes, what does the Church plan to do with the hall and the site?
A12	The Diocese has said that any decision to close the hall is for the PCC. However, the land and the building belong to the Diocese and so what becomes of the site is down to the Diocese. If the land is sold, it is hoped that funds would be made available for the works to St Andrews Church and also for the new hall – but there is no legal obligation on the Diocese to contribute to these projects. The church hall site might be seen as suitable for housing, but the Diocese would have to apply for a change of use from church hall to housing – there is a presumption against development as the site is in the Green Belt and the Conservation Area, but development on the land would be seen as in-fill and so consent might well be obtained.
Q13	Would a new community building be a viable proposition, ie would it be able to cover its cost or run at a profit?
A13	This will clearly depend on the balance between running costs and revenues earned from the users of the hall. Information gained from other village halls in the area would suggest that they do seem to be able to cover their costs. If the proposal is to go ahead, much work would have to be done on how best to manage the new facility and ensure that it becomes a viable entity. The intention is that the hall will be self-sustaining.
Q14	The Church runs the current Church Hall. Who would run the new village facility?
A14	This would have to be decided, but other halls locally tend to be run by a group of trustees and a management committee operating under a charitable status. The experience and expertise of the members of the church hall committee will, of course, be invaluable alongside other residents willing to contribute to the management of a new hall.

Q15	If the project went ahead, there would be many decisions to be made and issues to be looked into. Would the parish Council do this work?
A15	In order to spread the workload and make best use of the skills and expertise available, it would probably be better to have a project group drawn from volunteers within the village. The Parish Council would obviously have representatives on this group. Those who wish to offer their services are encouraged to contact the Parish Council.
Q16	Instead of building a hall on the Radfords' site, would Charles Church fund a new hall on the existing church hall site or another site in the village?
A16	Clearly, Charles Church can control the costs of the new build quite well when they are working on the existing development site. The project for them would be far more complex and costly on another site and it is very unlikely that it is something that they would contemplate. Equally, if another site was to be considered, then there could be difficulties in acquiring and gaining the necessary permissions (Green Belt etc.). A rebuild on the current Church Hall site would also be more costly and complicated and there would still be no parking or minimal parking. Realistically, therefore, it is unlikely that Charles Church would fund building elsewhere.
Q17	Would Charles Church give us a sum of money instead to enable us to build a new hall or to re-furbish the church hall?
A17	This is very unlikely but will be explored. The position with regard to the planning on the Radfords' site would be made significantly more complicated. Charles Church are much less likely to get planning consent to build houses on all of the light industrial land and so this is not likely to be that attractive to them as a proposal. Furthermore, any money would undoubtedly not be sufficient to fund the complete building of a hall elsewhere.
Q18	Could Charles Church build us something other than a new hall?
A18	This is a possibility but it needs to be something for which they can obtain planning consent. Retail consent will be hard to obtain. Consent for a small community café or some offices or small workshops might be possible. Please send your suggestions and comments to the Parish Council.
Q19	Would parking be provided at the new facility?
A19	The plan currently includes parking for twelve spaces. Arrangements would be made for the sharing of the parking spaces belonging to the medical centre out of surgery hours – the doctors have already given this their blessing. Parking is clearly a major area of contention and the Parish Council has been concerned about possible parking problems with the new surgery since it first saw the planning drawings. Some difficulties seem inevitable bearing in mind that patients will be coming to the surgery from all over the Chew Valley and we know, from the rugby parking, that some drivers are very inconsiderate. On top of this, there is the potential for parking problems if we have three light industrial units next to the surgery. The Parish Council's view is that there are likely to be some problems whatever the final use of the land and it is something that we must

	try to resolve when the difficulties arise. The majority of events held in the church hall do not involve very large numbers of visitors.
Q20	Wouldn't the hall create a noise nuisance for those in Dairy Way?
A20	There is no good reason for this to be the case. The current church hall is surrounded by houses and there have been no problems with rowdiness or late night noise. Any new hall would be owned and managed by the community for the community and so it will be down to the community to ensure that the hall is managed well and ensuring that there is no nuisance for adjoining properties will be high on the list of priorities. There are no late-night parties at the church hall and so there is no reason for there to be any at any new hall (and there are other facilities in the parish to host such events).
Q21	Will Charles Church go ahead with the application to relax Condition 11 anyway?
A21	It is likely that Charles Church will apply for the lifting of the condition at some point in the near future.
Q22	How can I make my feelings known?
A22	Please contact any Parish Councillor (names and contact details on the village noticeboards) or e:mail the Clerk at: clerk@chewstoke.org.uk or the Chair at chair@chewstoke.org.uk